

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 remain in the application for further prosecution.

Claims 9-14, 23, and 32 have been allowed and claims 4-8, 18-22 and 27-31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent from including all of the limitations of the base claim. Claims 1-3, 15-17, 24-26, 33, and 34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 3,812,370 ("LaViolette") in combination with U.S. Publication No. 2002/0139741 ("Kopf").

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 9-14, 23, and 32 have been allowed and claims 4-8, 18-22 and 27-31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent from including all of the limitations of the base claim.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 15, 24, 33, and 34 are the only rejected independent claims. In general, the Examiner alleged that LaViolette disclosed "a filter housing (11) having at least two filter (23, 24) mounting zones for receiving at least two filter assemblies," but failed to disclose "a filter assembly comprising a filter body having a given peripheral configuration and a filter gasket configured for interfitting about a periphery of said filter body..." Office Action at p. 2. However, according to the Examiner, Kopf disclosed at Fig. 2 a filter assembly "comprising a filter body having a given peripheral configuration and a filter gasket configured for interfitting about a periphery of said filter body..." *Id.*

The Applicants do not believe that the Examiner has made a *prima facie* case of obviousness. In order to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness, there must be some suggestion or motivation to combine the references. The Examiner has provided no such motivation or suggestion. The Examiner has merely cited to two references and claimed that they disclose all of the features of the pending claims.

Assuming, *arguendo*, that a suggestion and/or motivation to combine was provided, the references cited by the Examiner fail to disclose, either singly, or in combination, all of the features of the independent claims. Independent claims 1, 15, 24, 33, and 34 all include the limitation of "sealingly engaging...in response to forces by said filter assembly (assemblies in claim 33) both upon assembly and in operation." Neither LaViolette nor Kopf disclose such a feature. As explained in the specification, during the operation of the filter assembly, a force is created that is used to compress the seals in such a way as to be self-sealing. Specification, pp. 9-10. LaViolette and Kopf are silent as to such a function. Thus, even if the combination of LaViolette and Kopf were proper, independent claims 1, 15, 24, 33, and 34 are all believed to be allowable for at least this reason.

Because claims 2, 3, 16, 17, 25, and 26 are all dependent upon these independent claims, they are also believed to be allowable.

Conclusion

It is the Applicants' belief that all the pending claims are now in condition for allowance, and thus reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. If there are any matters which may be resolved or clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the number indicated.

It is believed that no fee is presently due; however, should any additional fees be required (except for payment of the issue fee), the Commissioner is authorized to deduct the fees from Jenkins & Gilchrist, P.C. Deposit Account No. 10-0447, Order No. 47181-00248.

Respectfully submitted,

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